

DARK HORSE  
COMICS

C L A S S I C

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# STAR WARS



Williamson D-15

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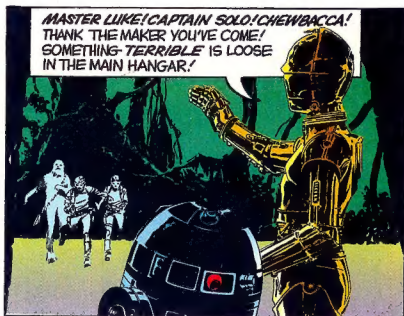
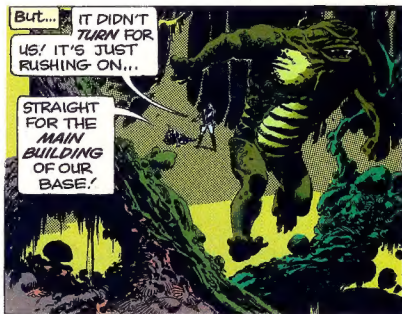
## WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

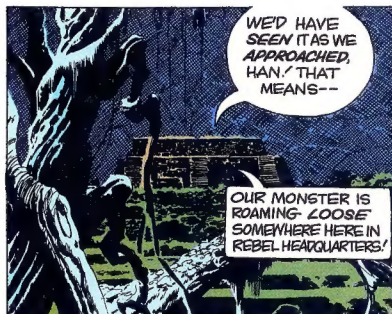
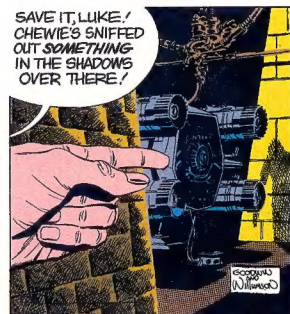
An underwater hunt with Silver Fyre on Aquaris goes awry, and Luke's skimmer is caught and crushed by a demonsquid. They escape with Silver Fyre's help, and uncover a treasonous plot by Kraaken to purloin secret information carried by the droids. Leaving Aquaris, the Rebels arrive back at Yavin Base just as an Imperial raider's ship crashes into the ancient Massassi ruins, unleashing the ferocious Night Beast, who proves to be a match for even Chewie . . .









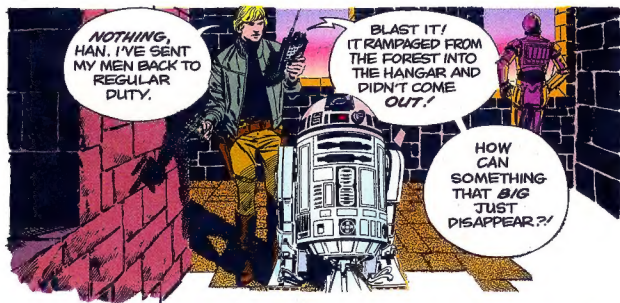






LATER...

LUKE...HOW'S THE SEARCH GOIN' ON YOUR LEVEL? CHEWIE'S TEAM DREW A **BLANK**. SAME WITH OUR OTHERS.



**NOTHING, HAN. I'VE SENT MY MEN BACK TO REGULAR DUTY.**

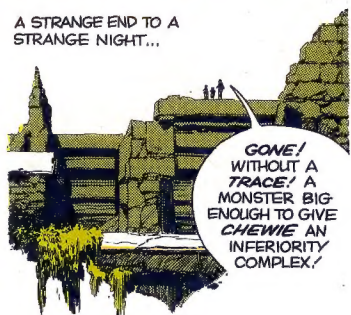
**BLAST IT! IT RAMPAGED FROM THE FOREST INTO THE HANGAR AND DIDN'T COME OUT!**

**HOW CAN SOMETHING THAT BIG JUST DISAPPEAR?!**



**SUPERSTITION ISN'T PART OF MY PROGRAMMING, SIR ... BUT AREN'T THERE MONSTERS IN HUMAN LEGEND THAT *VANISH* WITH *SUNRISE*?**

A STRANGE END TO A STRANGE NIGHT...



**GONE! WITHOUT A TRACE! A MONSTER BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE CHEWIE AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX!**

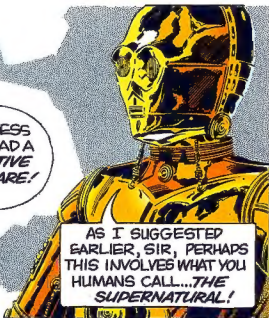
THE PLACE HAS  
BEEN THOROUGHLY  
SEARCHED, HAN. THE  
ROOF IS THE LAST--

SOMETHIN'  
RAMPAGED  
THROUGH THE  
MAIN HANGAR...

...UNLESS  
WE ALL HAD A  
COLLECTIVE  
NIGHTMARE!



AS I SUGGESTED  
EARLIER, SIR, PERHAPS  
THIS INVOLVES WHAT YOU  
HUMANS CALL...*THE  
SUPERNATURAL!*



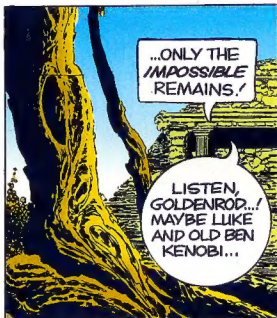
KID, IS THIS TINPLATED  
TROUBLEMAKER *SERIOUSLY*  
SUGGESTING WE FOUGHT A  
GHOST LAST NIGHT?

YOU MAY LAUGH,  
CAPTAIN SOLO,  
BUT ONCE  
EVERYTHING  
POSSIBLE IS  
ELIMINATED...



...ONLY THE  
*IMPOSSIBLE*  
REMAINS!

LISTEN,  
GOLDENROD...!  
MAYBE LUKE  
AND OLD BEN  
KENOBI...



...GAVE ME SECOND  
THOUGHTS ABOUT THE  
FORCE BEIN' MUMBO-  
JUMBO, BUT *NOTHIN'S*  
GONNA MAKE ME  
BELIEVE--

HAN, THAT'S A  
POSSIBILITY  
WE *HAVEN'T*  
ELIMINATED!

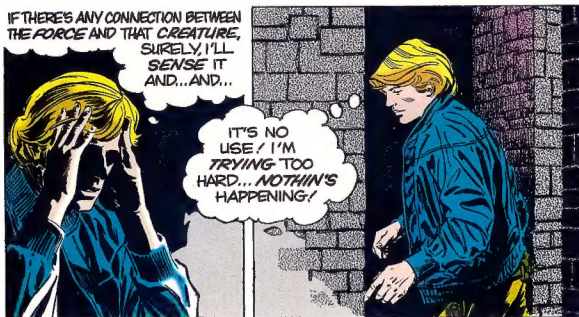
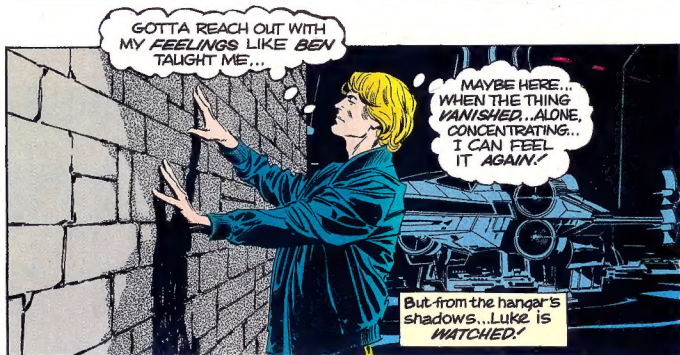
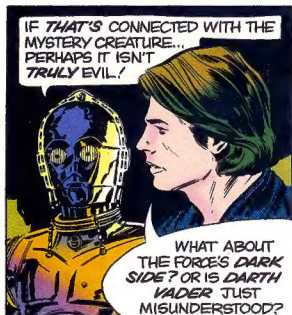


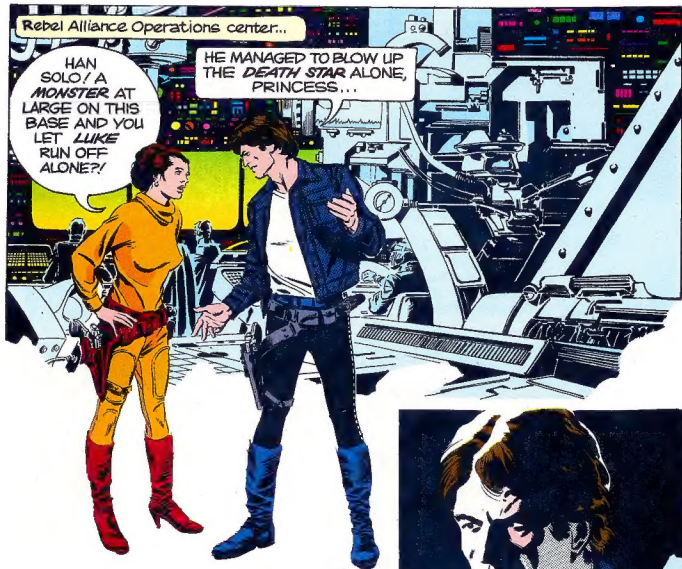
LUKE...  
*LUKE!*  
WHERE YOU  
GOIN'??

YOUR REMARK ABOUT  
THE *FORCE* SEEMS TO  
HAVE TRIGGERED  
SOMETHING, CAPTAIN...!









Rebel Alliance Operations center...

HAN  
SOLO / A  
MONSTER AT  
LARGE ON THIS  
BASE AND YOU  
LET *LUKE*  
RUN OFF  
ALONE?!

HE MANAGED TO BLOW UP  
THE *DEATH STAR* ALONE,  
PRINCESS...



...AND AGAINST  
A CREATURE THAT  
SHRUGS OFF  
BLASTER FIRE AND  
SEEMINGLY  
*DISAPPEARS* AT  
WILL, I DOUBT I'D  
MAKE MUCH  
DIFFERENCE...

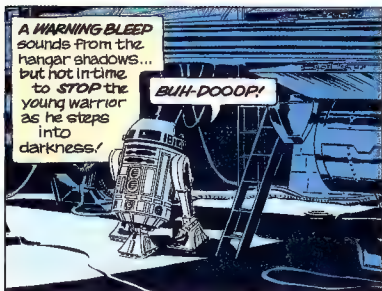


"...PARTICULARLY SINCE  
THE KID SEEMS TO  
BE TESTING SOME-  
*THIN'* INVOLVING  
THE *FORCE*,"

I *THOUGHT*  
THERE WAS A  
*TRACE* WHEN  
WE FIRST  
FOUGHT THE  
THING!



NOW WE KNOW  
HOW OUR NIGHT  
BEAST SEEMINGLY  
*VANISHED!*  
BUT THERE'S *SOME*  
ASPECT OF THE  
FORCE ABOUT IT!  
I CAN FEEL--



A *WARNING BLEEP*  
sounds from the  
hangar shadows...  
but not in time  
to *STOP* the  
young warrior  
as he steps  
into  
darkness!

*BUIH-DOOOP!*



*ARTOO-DETOO...!*  
DON'T TRY TO *FOLLOW*  
ME...THAT STONE'S  
*SLAMMING SHUT!*



The great stone slides back  
into place! Followed by *PITCH*  
*DARKNESS* and...

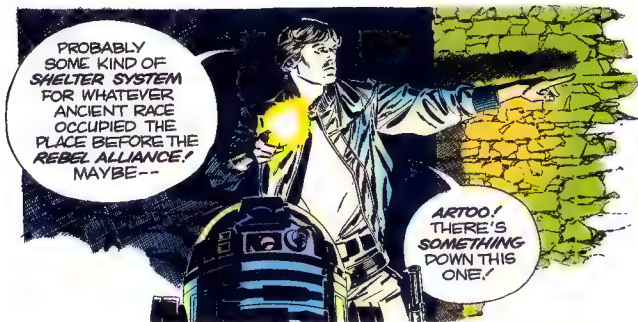
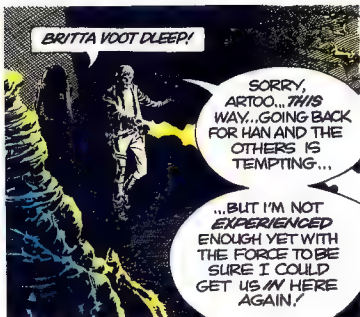
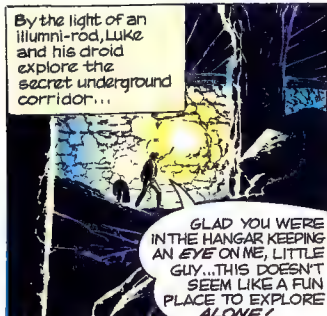
*SKREEEEET!*



Then...

DON'T *PANIC*,  
ARTOO! LOOKS  
LIKE YOU SQUEEZED  
IN SAFELY...WITH  
AT LEAST A *MICRO-  
CHIP'S WIDTH*  
TO SPARE!





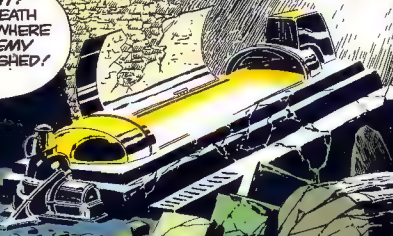


Swiftly, Luke  
extinguishes  
his illumni-rod!

YOUR SENSORS  
REGISTERING THAT,  
ARTOO? A TRACE  
OF LIGHT  
DOWN THERE!



AND MORE THAN *THAT*,  
LITTLE GUY...THE SAME  
TRACE OF THE *FORCE*  
I CONNECTED WITH  
THE *CREATURE* WE'RE  
HUNTING!



**DAYLIGHT!**  
WE'RE BENEATH  
THE RUINS WHERE  
THE *ENEMY*  
SHIP CRASHED!

THAT'S WHAT CAUSED THE  
DAMAGE DOWN HERE! AND  
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS...



...IT ALSO  
DISTURBED  
OUR MYSTERIOUS  
*CREATURE* FROM  
ITS *RESTING*  
PLACE!



PLUG INTO THIS  
EQUIPMENT, LITTLE GUY!  
MAYBE WE CAN **LEARN**  
SOMETHING EVEN IF  
WHAT WE'RE SEEKING  
ISN'T **AROUND!**

Meanwhile...



YOUR HIGHNESS! CAPTAIN SOLO!  
**MORE** DISTRESSING NEWS! NOT ONLY  
IS **MASTER LUKE** MISSING... **ARTOO-**  
**DETOO'S** VANISHED ALSO!



THREEPIO'S  
PINTSIZED  
COUNTERPART  
USUALLY KEEPS  
**TABS** ON THE  
KID.



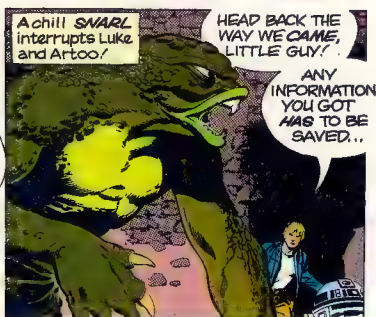
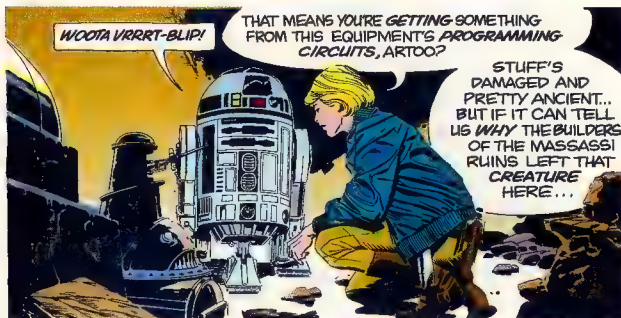
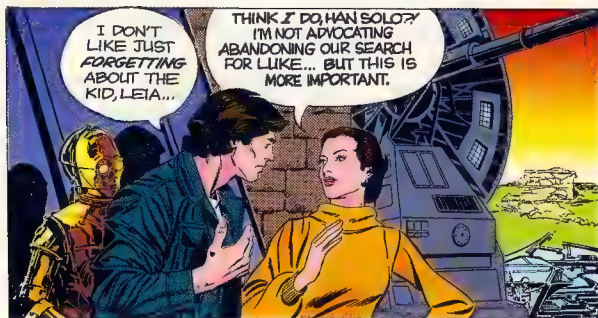
SEEMS PRETTY  
LIKELY **WHATEVER'S**  
HAPPENED, THEY'RE  
**TOGETHER!**  
MAYBE WE SHOULD  
MAKE ONE MORE  
**SEARCH** BEFORE--

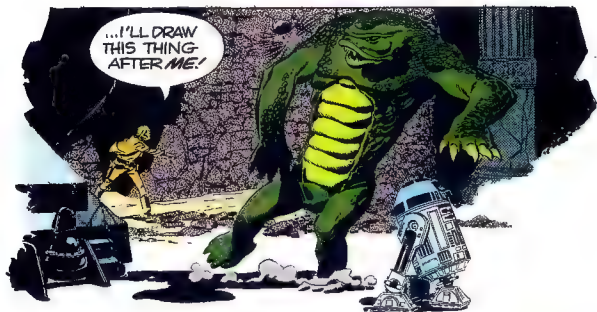


**NIGHT'S** COMING, THREEPIO!  
IF THAT **MONSTER** COMES  
WITH IT AGAIN... WE'VE GOT  
TO BE  
**READY!**

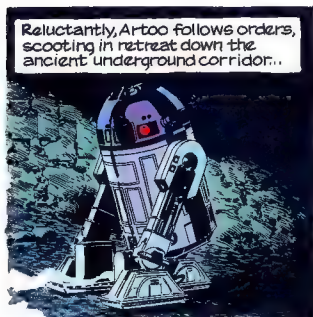








...I'LL DRAW  
THIS THING  
AFTER ME!



Reluctantly, Artoo follows orders,  
scooting in retreat down the  
ancient underground corridor...



...as Luke finds his *DIVERSION*  
all too successful!

THIS WAY  
WILL TAKE ME  
UP THROUGH THE  
RUINS TO THE  
SURFACE...



...EXCEPT THAT  
CREATURE CLIMBS  
A LOT FASTER  
THESE BOULDERS  
THAN I DO!



THAT  
MONSTER  
WILL BE ON  
ME BEFORE I  
MAKE IT OUT  
OF THESE  
RUINS!



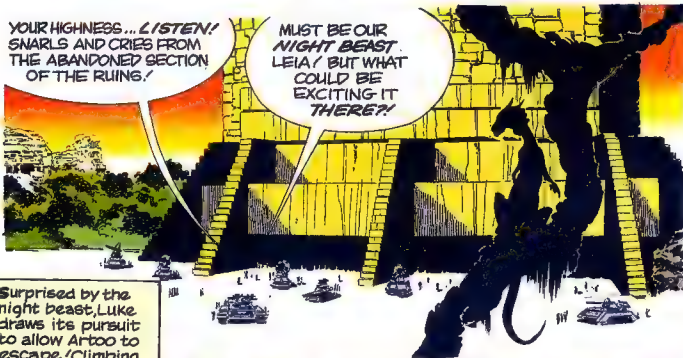
GOT TO FIGHT!  
AND SINCE BLASTERS  
HAVE NO EFFECT  
ON IT, THAT ONLY  
LEAVES...



...MY LIGHTSABER!

YOUR HIGHNESS... LISTEN!  
SNARLS AND CRIES FROM  
THE ABANDONED SECTION  
OF THE RUINS!

MUST BE OUR  
NIGHT BEAST  
LEIA! BUT WHAT  
COULD BE  
EXCITING IT  
THERE?!



Surprised by the  
night beast, Luke  
draws its pursuit  
to allow Artoo to  
escape. Climbing  
to the ruins above...  
he makes a **LAST  
STAND.**

BLASTERS  
HAVE NO  
EFFECT/ONLY  
HOPE IS...MY  
LIGHTSABER!



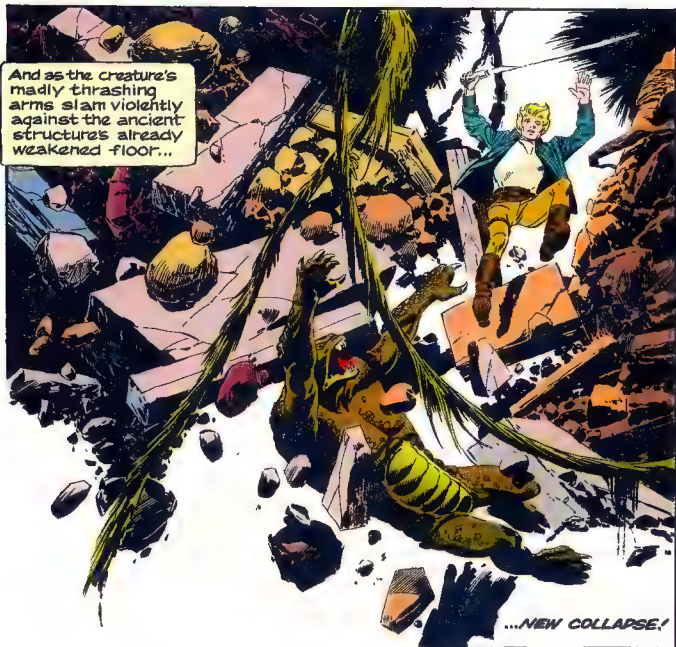


SEEMS TO MAKE IT *ANGRIER...*  
LASH OUT MORE *WILDLY!*  
THE *LIGHT!*

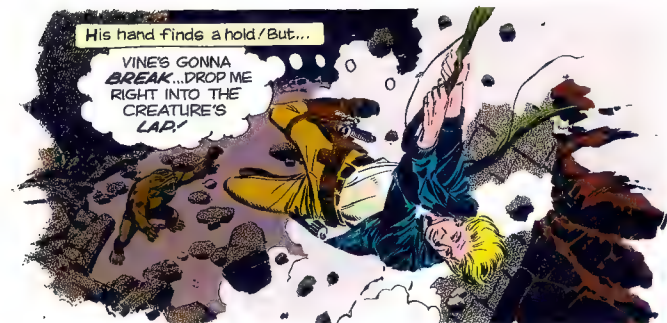
AFTER  
SLUMBERING SO  
LONG *UNDERGROUND*  
ANY STRONG LIGHT  
MUST DRIVE IT  
*BERSERK!* LIKE  
WHEN IT  
ATTACKED  
OUR *HANGAR!*



And as the creature's  
madly thrashing  
arms slam violently  
against the ancient  
structure's already  
weakened floor...



...NEW COLLAPSE!



His hand finds a hold! But...

VINE'S GONNA  
**BREAK**...DROP ME  
RIGHT INTO THE  
CREATURE'S  
**LAP!**

As the vine Luke clings to **SNAPS**...



**ROWWRK!**



CHEWIE!  
HAN!  
HOW?

YOU RAISED  
ENOUGH **NOISE**  
FIGHTIN' THAT  
CREATURE WE HEARD  
IT OVER AT THE MAIN  
BASE...DECIDED  
TO INVESTIGATE!

YOU'VE **SOLVED** OUR MONSTER  
PROBLEM, KID...NO WAY OUR  
UGLY-TEMPERED FRIEND CAN  
CLIMB FROM THERE NOW!



HE  
DOESN'T  
**HAVE**  
TO!



THERE ARE **HIDDEN TUNNELS**  
CONNECTING ALL THE BUILDINGS  
OF THE RUINS, HAN...PROBABLY  
PART OF A SHELTER SYSTEM  
BUILT BY MASSASSI'S  
ORIGINAL RESIDENTS!

AND OUR NIGHT  
BEAST *USED* ONE  
FOR HIS  
DISAPPEARING  
ACT?

HE CAN *ALSO*  
USE THEM TO  
*REAPPEAR*...  
ANYWHERE HE  
WANTS.



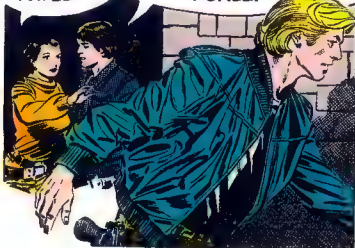
MAKES A *DEFENSE*  
PRETTY IMPOSSIBLE!  
*BLAST IT!* GOTTA BE  
SOME WAY TO FIGHT  
THAT THING.



MAYBE  
THERE */S...*  
IF I CAN FIND  
*ARTOO-DETOO!*

*LUKE!* WHAT'S  
HAPPENING?  
WHERE HAVE  
YOU BE--

NOT *NOW*, YOUR WORSHIP! THE  
KID'S GOTTA DO SOME FAST  
AND FANCY EVOKING OF THE  
*FORCE!*



ON A  
*BLANK*  
WALL?!



A wall with a section that *MOVES*...

THAT'S A *TUNNEL*  
BACK THERE, HAN!  
A-AND *SOMETHING'S*  
IN IT!

STAY *BACK*, LEIA...  
UNTIL WE'RE SURE  
*WHAT!*



*VEETA BRID*  
*WHIR-DOOO!*

ARTOO... *GREAT!* YOU GOT  
BACK THROUGH THE TUNNELS  
JUST LIKE I *TOLD* YOU  
TO DO!





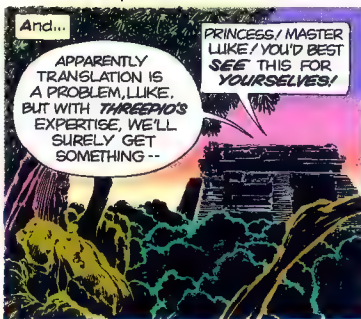
NOW LET'S SEE IF YOUR TAPPING  
THE MEMORY CIRCUITS OF THAT  
**EQUIPMENT** IN THE NIGHT  
BEAST'S **RESTING SPOT**  
NETTED ANYTHING  
TO **HELP US!**



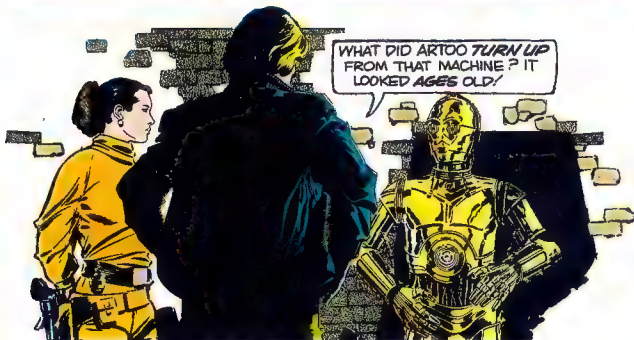
And...

APPARENTLY  
TRANSLATION IS  
A PROBLEM, LUKE.  
BUT WITH **THREEPIO'S**  
EXPERTISE, WE'LL  
SURELY GET  
SOMETHING --

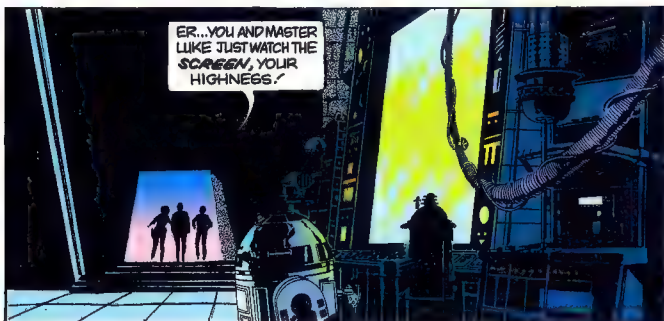
PRINCESS! MASTER  
LUKE! YOU'D BEST  
**SEE THIS FOR  
YOURSELVES!**

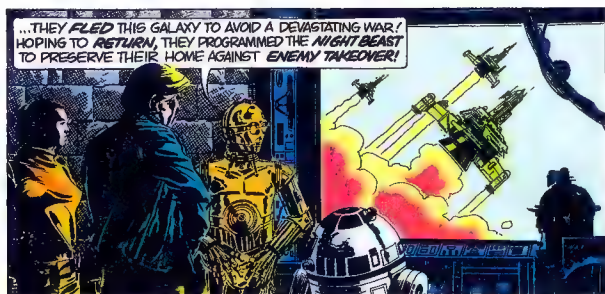
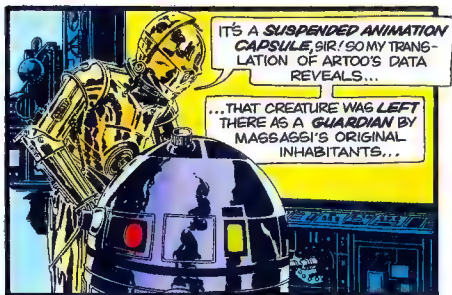


WHAT DID ARTOO **TURN UP**  
FROM THAT MACHINE? IT  
LOOKED **AGES OLD!**



ER...YOU AND MASTER  
LUKE JUST WATCH THE  
**SCREEN, YOUR  
HIGHNESS.**

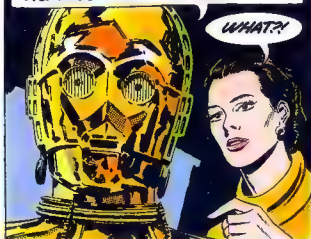


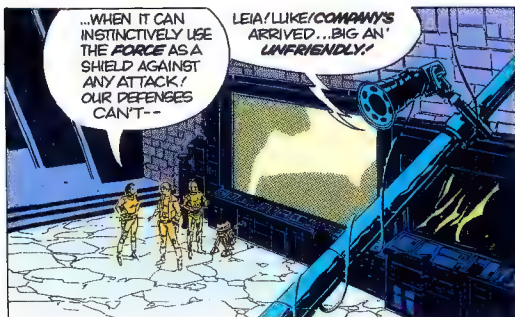
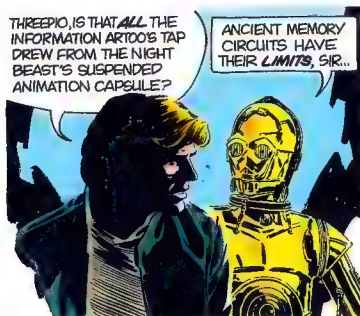
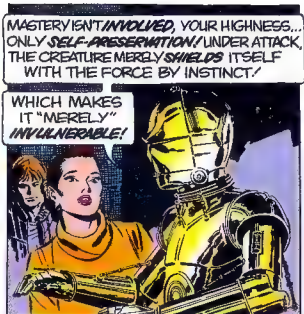


ONLY THE RECENT *IMPERIAL ATTACK* DISTURBED ITS AGES-LONG SLEEP.. SO IT'S PREYING ON *US*! AREN'T THERE ANY *HINTS* WHAT WE CAN *DO* ABOUT IT?!



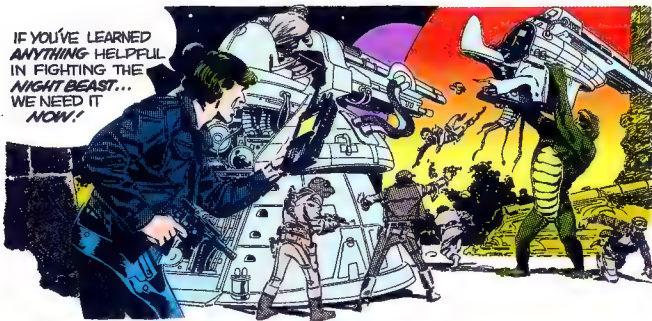
MASSAGGI'S ORIGINAL INHABITANTS CHOSE THEIR *GUARDIAN WELL*! IN SOME NATURAL, PRIMITIVE WAY... IT'S ATTUNED TO *ASPECTS* OF THE *FORCE*!







IF YOU'VE LEARNED  
ANYTHING HELPFUL  
IN FIGHTING THE  
NIGHT BEAST...  
WE NEED IT  
NOW!



THE HEAVY WEAPONS  
AREN'T WORKING!



IF BEN KENOBI  
WERE ALIVE, HE'D  
PROBABLY USE THE  
FORCE TO COMMUNICATE  
WITH THE CREATURE. I'M NOT  
IN HIS CLASS, LEIA... BUT... MAYBE...



LEIA! THE  
NIGHT BEAST  
IS MAKING A  
SHAMBLES OF  
THE OUTER  
DEFENCES!

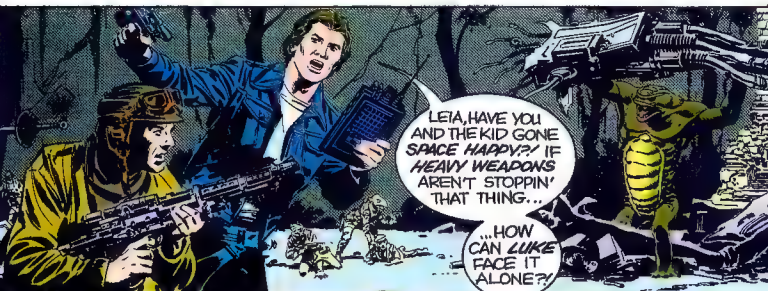
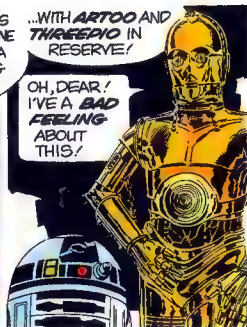
BETTER  
SEND US A  
MIRACLE  
FAST!

HOW ABOUT A  
**CRAZY IDEA**  
INSTEAD,  
HAN?

THE PRINCESS IS  
ORDERING EVERYONE  
**BACK!** I'M GONNA  
MEET THAT THING  
**ALONE...**

...WITH **ARTOO** AND  
**THREEPIO** IN  
RESERVE!

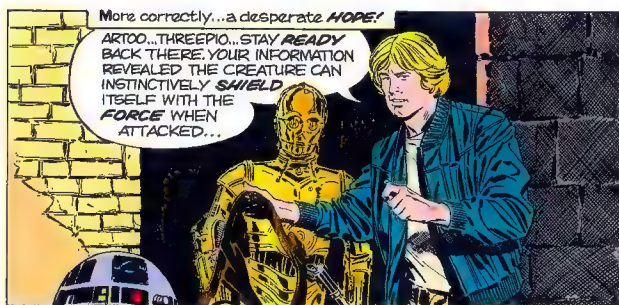
OH, DEAR!  
I'VE A **BAD**  
**FEELING**  
ABOUT  
THIS!



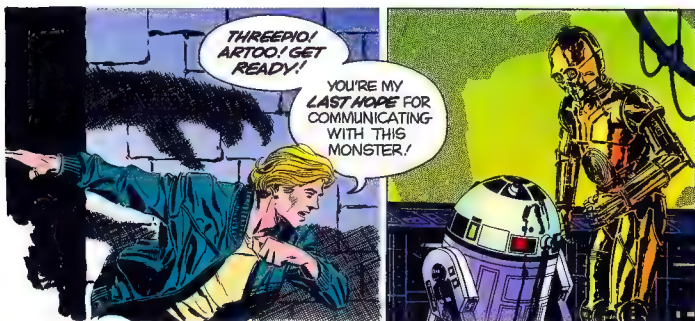
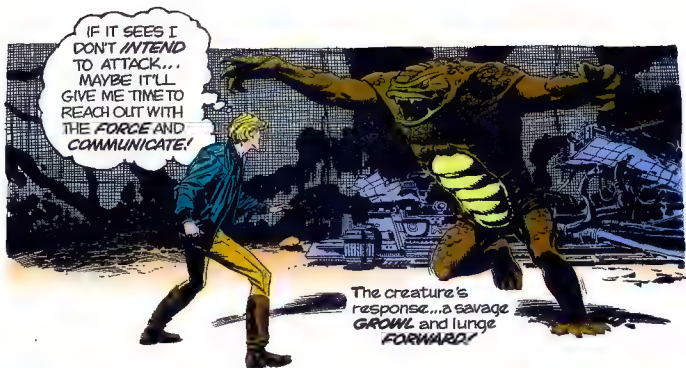
HE **INSISTED**, HAN...AND I'M TOO  
**DESPERATE** ABOUT THE FATE OF THIS  
BASE NOT TO LET HIM **TRY!**

**WITHDRAW...**  
**AS ORDERED!**





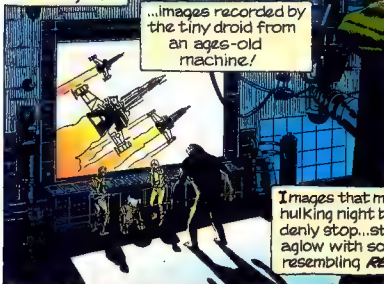




Running...Luke leads the night beast into the Rebel base's main hangar./



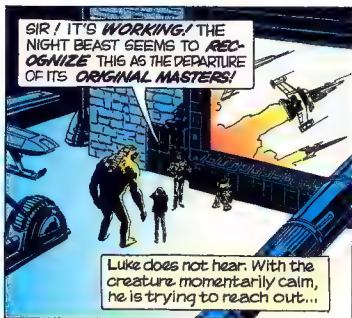
And suddenly the hangar's giant com-screen **GLOWS** with images...



...Images recorded by the tiny droid from an ages-old machine!

Images that make the hulking night beast suddenly stop...stare...eyes aglow with something resembling **RECOGNITION!**

SIR! IT'S **WORKING!** THE NIGHT BEAST SEEMS TO **RECOGNIZE** THIS AS THE DEPARTURE OF ITS **ORIGINAL MASTERS!**



Luke does not hear. With the creature momentarily calm, he is trying to reach out...



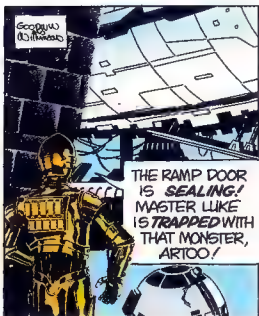
...reach out with the **FORCE**.

And suddenly, the monster whirls toward Luke... howling and snarling!



The night beast stalks after Luke... into a Rebel supply ship!





THREEPIO! HAVE A GROUND CREW MOVE THIS OUT FOR AN AUTO-PROGRAMMED **TAKE-OFF!**

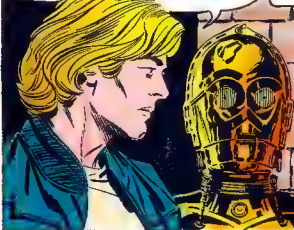


SIR... YOU **OUTWITTED** THE CREATURE!



NO! I TOUCHED ITS MIND ENOUGH TO SEE IT WAS HOWLING IN **LOVELINESS...** AND SHOWED IT A WAY TO FOLLOW WHERE ITS **ORIGINAL MASTERS** WENT.

ONCE I **REACHED** THE NIGHT BEAST WITH THE **FORCE**, THREEPIO... IT SEEMED TO **RECOGNIZE** I WASN'T THE ANCIENT ENEMY IT WAS LEFT HERE TO **BATTLE**.



THEN IT WENT **WILLINGLY** INTO THE SHIP, SIR? AS A WAY TO **FIND** ITS ORIGINAL **MASTERS**?





# STELLAR scribes

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**And the nonstop praise for  
*Classic Star Wars* just keeps  
rollin' in. I love it!**

David Whitsett  
2302 Donau Ct.  
Owensboro, KY 42301

Welcome to *Classic Star Wars*, Bob. I trust you will keep up the fine quality that we've come to expect on this book, thanks to the hard work of your predecessor, Anina Bennett [you have my word!]. I was 16 when *Star Wars* premiered in 1977. My older brother and I were (and still are) big science-fiction fans. Back then good science fiction was usually written science fiction. With the exception of 2001: A Space Odyssey, most sci-fi movies were poorly written and/or on a low budget. The few that were well-written usually had pretty cheesy special effects that distracted the viewer from the story line. I'm sure the major movie studios did not figure that there was a big enough market for a major, big-budget sci-fi feature.

I remember being aware that a new movie called *Star Wars* was about to be released. It even made the cover of *Time Magazine*. According to the article, the special effects were going to be first rate. My brother and I waited impatiently for the movie to reach our town. I was lucky and got to see the movie first, on a high school trip to Louisville, Kentucky. We had an afternoon to kill and our teacher suggested that we go see a movie. Somehow I

managed to talk everyone into going to see *Star Wars*. They were skeptical, but finally agreed. This particular theater had a curved screen and stereo sound and for the next two hours I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I'll never forget the opening scene when the large battle cruiser appears at the top of the screen and seems to go on forever. My teacher and fellow students loved the movie (along with everyone else in the galaxy that has seen it!). I raved about it so much that my brother even drove to Louisville (about 90 miles away) so that he could see it on a curved screen! Needless to say, the *Star Wars* phenomena spread across the whole country that year. The movie exceeded everyone's expectations.

Many science-fiction fans have criticized the movies for being long on action and special effects and short on plot. To me, the movies are above criticism. Despite their few faults, they legitimized science fiction in the eyes of the public and showed the major studios that there was an audience for that kind of product. I firmly believe that the popularity of the *Star Wars* saga paved the way for brilliant movies like *Blade Runner* and *Alien*. It is doubtful that Paramount would have given the go-ahead for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* if not for the massive popularity of *Star Wars*. All science-fiction fans owe a great debt to George Lucas and his wonderful creation.

I have seen each of the movies several times over the years but I had never read any of the related novels or comics series until Dark Horse released the *Dark Empire* miniseries last year. The six *Dark Empire* issues are the best comic-book science fiction that I have ever read. I'm glad Dark Horse is releasing the entire series in trade paperback form. Now I won't wear out my original copies when I read the story over and over.

I was at a local comics shop one day, looking for the next installment of *Dark Empire*, when I chanced upon issue #1 of *Classic Star Wars*. I bought it more out of curiosity than anything else. I had never read the newspaper strips and figured that the quality would be fair at best. Needless to say, I was pleasantly surprised. Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson did a great job at capturing the excitement and adventures of the movies and Steve Buccellato has excelled in the difficult task of coloring what were originally black-and-white newspaper strips. I assume that the stories published so far took place between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. It must have been difficult plotting stories when the outcome of the movie trilogy was unknown at that time.

After only five issues we've seen all of the major characters and had a run-in with Darth Vader. Luke's adventures on

the planet of the serpent masters are as exciting as any that we've seen on the big screen. This comic book shows that there is still plenty of great story potential in the *Star Wars* universe. I'm grateful to Dark Horse and Timothy Zahn for doing their best to keep the *Star Wars* legend alive. I'm looking forward to "Tales of the Jedi" in *Dark Horse Comics* #7. Now, if only George Lucas would take the hint and complete the nine movies that he had originally planned . . .

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Jeffrey Lindenblatt  
69-30 Groton St.  
Forest Hills, NY 11375

I wanted to tell you how much I've enjoyed reading your *Classic Star Wars* series. It is nice to see Williamson art in full color. I remember reading the *Star Wars* strip in *Amazing Heroes* and dreaded the day when I read that the *Star Wars* strip was ending in 1984. I still wonder what Goodwin and Williamson had planned for stories set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. I will never know. I am a strip collector and have almost a complete run of the *Star Wars* Sunday strips. I would like to see the Manning period done after you finish with Williamson.

I have a suggestion after you finish with the *Star Wars* strip: your company so far has printed a wonderful James Bond series called *Serpent's Tooth*, and I am waiting for the second series, *A Silent Armageddon*. How about reprinting America's number one comic secret agent, *Secret Agent Corrigan*? From 1967-80 Goodwin and Williamson took over the *Secret Agent X-9* strip. The style of the stories was

changed to fit the current trend in spy pictures — especially James Bond. So why not combine the best of James Bond and the *Classic Star Wars* series! Keep up the good work.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mark Kiesbrink  
Veenendaal, The Netherlands

The *Classic Star Wars* comics are great. I just love 'em. The art and story of these comics are great. Archie Goodwin did a great job in catching the *Star Wars* spirit, because the story has got the basic elements of a *Star Wars* story: adventure, excitement, and of course, humor and romance. The developing romance between Han Solo and Leia Organa is fabulous. It was just like watching the kissing scene in *Empire* again. The other great thing about this comic is the endless bantering between Artoo and Threepio.

And this great story is being brought alive by one of the greatest comic-book artists ever: Al Williamson. This man is really gifted. He can create an atmosphere in *Classic Star Wars* just like in the movies. For example, the characters look just as they look in the movies. His use of light in this comic is fantastic. Also, the expressions on the faces of the leading characters are exactly the same as they are in the movies.

A good example of the great cooperation between Goodwin and Williamson is the comic adaptation of *Blade Runner*. This comic is so fantastic that it's even on a level with the movie itself.

Keep up the good work and "may the Force be with you."

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Shaw  
85 Pleasant St.  
Boston, MA 02125

I can't thank you enough for the spark of childhood bliss you have bestowed upon me! I was blown away at the amount of creativity that went into the *Dark Empire* series (especially the explanations and history at the end of each issue). Have you been working on this since 1983? I do hope that you'll continue this wonderful work (like you promised) in *Tales of the Jedi*.

With that said, I do have a couple of questions: How far do you plan on going with the *Classic Star Wars* series? There's only so much material you can cover between the movies. I am looking forward to the story about the bounty hunter of Ord Mantell. I've been wondering who the heck this guy was ever since Han Solo mentioned it to Princess Leia as he was planning to leave Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Also, you wouldn't happen to know the titles of the three prequel books, would you? I've heard that George Lucas has decided to get off his high horse (no pun intended) and actually make more *Star Wars* films (it's about bloody time!) and I was hoping to read the books, because at his pace Mr. Lucas won't be done with these movies until I'm too old to leave the nursing home to see them.

And finally, where the heck are all the *Dark Empire* comics? They're all gone! Please tell me you're going to make more! I'm so desperate to have my fill of *Star Wars* literature that I'd do anything to get them (except pay more than the \$3.00 cover price plus shipping and handling, hint, hint!).

Anyways, now that I've given my views, just let me say thank

you again, and keep up the good work!

**The upcoming *Star Wars* movie trilogy to begin in 1997 will be based upon all original stories developed by George Lucas. The books don't exist yet, Mike — you'll just have to wait for the movies themselves like the rest of us. The hard-to-find *Star Wars: Dark Empire* saga has been collected into trade paperback format and is being offered for sale right this very minute at your local comics specialty store for the nice price of \$16.95.**

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Adam Smith  
Rt. 1, Box 165  
Frostburg, MD 21852

I just recently read *Classic Star Wars* #4. I have one thing to say to you: wonderful! Until the comics came out I'd almost worn out my copy of all the movies. I was only three years old when *Return of the Jedi* was released, but my cousin introduced me to it. He also gave me my collection of Kenner *Star Wars* action figures. Now I can't get enough of it! Keep up the good work! May the Force be with you!

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Justin da Mota  
220-16 94th Road  
Queens Village, NY 11428

Congratulations! Finally a *Star Wars* comic that is worth buying! These comics are great. I am 12 years old now, and ever since I was four, when I first saw the movies, I wanted to collect anything from *Star Wars*, especially the figures. Unfortunately, the figures were almost all gone when I started collecting them. I have been wanting to collect

anything that has something to do with *Star Wars* ever since. I can't wait for the Topps trading cards and the next trilogy. When you finish reprinting all the newspaper strips I hope you consider writing your own *Star Wars* comic. Until then keep printing *Classic Star Wars*.

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Brendon Wahlberg  
5533 Forbes Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

I am a 26-year-old *Star Wars* devotee. I love reading your letters page and seeing how many people there are who love the saga as much as I do. Your *Classic Star Wars* comic is well-done; although I have the Russ Cochran collection of these strips, you have created a new version worth having. The coloring, the new artwork (including those *great covers*), and the letter column make this comic worth collecting. I sit and compare the hardcover version with yours, trying to pick out exactly what you have done. My compliments to Mr. Buccellato. The Williamson artwork is very detailed (take for example Threepio and Vader), and the coloring here does justice to the many shades of color that are realistically found on "metallic" characters.

I'd like to put in my two cents concerning reprints of strips prior to the Goodwin/Williamson ones. I saved nearly every single strip from that period in a scrapbook, so I am familiar with the stories. I suggest that you be very selective in reprinting these. While some of the stories are good, others are poor for the following reason: they are childish in nature (although I have an affection for them) and they don't fit into the general *Star Wars* continuity very

well. The wonderful thing about the Goodwin/Williamson strips is that they were done with hindsight. The second (and later the third) films were available, and so the strips could be infused with the stuff of those films, making them "fit" with the trilogy. For example, Hoth, the Executor, Ord Mantell, Han and Leia's relationship, Vader's hunt for Luke, and Jabba the Hutt could all be used. The other strips elaborate on a *Star Wars* universe that lacks the distinctive direction and background that the other films supply, working only with *A New Hope* as background.

Other such efforts, such as *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*, also do not fit the general continuity of the films. The following is a list of the older adventures I have. If any fans out there have collected them as well, and if anyone is missing a few individual daily strips (as I am), perhaps we can exchange photocopies by mail. I wouldn't charge more than copying costs, or else I'd trade for strips I am missing:

- 1) "Gambler's World" (Manning and Gerber)
- 2) "Tatooine Sojourn" (Manning and Gerber)
- 3) "Princess Leia, Imperial Servant" (Manning and Helm)
- 4) "The Second Kessel Run"
- 5) "Bring Me the Children"
- 6) "As Long as We Live"
- 7) "The Frozen World of Ota" (Hoberg and Stevens)
- 8) "Planet of Kadriil" (Helm and Alcalá)
- 9) "Han Solo at Star's End" (Daley, Goodwin, and Alcalá)

The strip, I feel, hit its low points with adventures #3-6, and #8. Maybe "Han Solo at



Star's End" would make a good reprint miniseries. Keep up the good work. You at Dark Horse are helping to keep *Star Wars* alive!

P.S.: Learning the background of the *Star Wars* newspaper strip (how it came to be) would be really interesting. What can you tell us?

Well . . . I can tell you that George Lucas, a real comics fan, had been a great admirer of Al Williamson's art on the series of *Flash Gordon* comics he'd done with Archie Goodwin for King Comics in the 1960s. George had been trying to arrange for Al to work on material connected with *Star Wars* since the mid-1970s — prior to the actual release of the first *Star Wars* movie. Charlie Lippincott of Lucasfilm contacted Al in December 1977 and asked him to do some sample *Star Wars* strips, with the intention of having Al start out on the first *Star Wars* newspaper strip that Russ Manning eventually wound up working on. Al was absolutely thrilled that a filmmaker of the stature of George Lucas thought enough of his work to ask him to become involved with *Star Wars*. Al drew the strips, but circumstances conspired to keep him from beginning work on the newspaper strip for another three and a half years — primarily his existing contract on the *Secret Agent Corrigan* strip, which was taking up most of his time then anyway.

Archie had been scripting Marvel's *Star Wars* comic for about three years prior to beginning his run on the newspaper strip. When Al's schedule finally allowed him to pick up

the art chores on the *Star Wars* newspaper strip in late 1980, he immediately requested that his good friend and frequent collaborator, Archie Goodwin, write the strip.

It was a conscious decision on the creators' part to set the continuity of the strip between the first and second movies. They specifically wanted the benefit of knowing what "officially" came afterward in the *Star Wars* universe, as set out by its creator, George Lucas. Archie and Al discussed plotting each episode of the strip, and Al contributed ideas for the stories, as well as individual characters, and scenes. Archie, an artist in his own right, wrote the full scripts for each 10-12 week story arc, and then provided Al with roughs from which Al would supply the art for the strip.

If you'd like more insights into Archie and Al's *Star Wars* work, check out (if you can get your hands on it) Russ Cochran's *Star Wars* reprint series that first collected the strips now appearing in slightly different form in *Classic Star Wars*. The first volume includes introductions by George Lucas, Russ Cochran, Archie, and Al.

\*\*\*\*\*

Incidentally, there are a few oversights that I'd like to rectify — number one being the uncredited work of the letterer who worked on the original *Star Wars* strips with Archie and Al — Ed King . . . ! Also let me mention the background and fill-in work done on some of the strips by Alden McWilliams, Carlos Garzon, Tom Yeates, and Brent Anderson.

\*\*\*\*\*

And now for the final word this month . . .

Bill Kohler  
1238 Coburn Rd.  
Eugene, OR 97401

Continuity, black-and-white printing, titles: everyone's a critic! Humbug, I say, humbug! I have *nothing* but praise for ANYTHING *Star Wars*. My only complaint is the lack of timeliness of newsstand delivery.

How about a different kind of letter today? I was already an adult when I saw *Star Wars* and not much of a space fan. A year later I read *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*. I was now quickly coming to take space seriously, and why not the *Star Wars* universe, too? Who knows what is going on in our galaxy or the others?

I've now received some technical schooling, and my number one goal is to work in the space industry to help get the human race "out there" as soon as possible. Considering the lack of activity in our aerospace industry these days, it is space, sci-fi, and especially *Star Wars* that keeps the dream alive for me. George Lucas opened up the future for me and now I am a man with a mission. I took *Star Wars* seriously, you see. There is nothing, nothing, mankind can't do. If we can conceive it and we can believe it — we can achieve it!

Keep up the great work. Thank you.

Well said, Bill. Your substantial optimism vouches well for refuting many of the skeptics who believe that human ideals have seen better times.

— Bob Cooper



# DCP

PRESENTS A  
SCAN BY

# DARTH SCANNER

*Leeching leads to the Dark Side of the Force.  
A good Jedi buys comics and supports the industry!*